



POLICE COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, NOV 16, 2016
MUNICIPAL CENTER, 1 SCHOOL ST MEETING ROOM "B"

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN MIKE DUFF
COMMISSIONER ANTHONY RUBINO
COMMISSIONER RICHARD KOLWICZ
COMMISSIONER KEVIN CLEARY
CHIEF JEFFREY FINCH

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER AMY MANNION

ATTENDANCE: Police Officers 5
Citizens 1

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TOWN CLERK

Chairman Duff opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.
The Commission pledged allegiance to the flag.
First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker was in attendance.

1. Public Input

Four police officers spoke concerning proposed policy revision language (see minutes of 10/18/16 #5 General Orders Revisions). Sgt Keith McKenzie stated that while he appreciates the Commission's concern for officers, prohibiting working more than 12 hours would pose a "scheduling disaster". In his 23 years with the Department there have been no car accidents or bad decisions by overly tired officers.

Officer Tom Schretzenmayer agreeing with Sgt McKenzie's words added that in his 4½ years there he also has seen no issues with tired officers crashing cars or making bad decisions based on tiredness.

Sgt Bruce Rost stated that reducing working hours to a limit of 12 would pose a hardship for the department and the officers concerned. No officers have ever stated that they were too tired to work an additional shift. If tiredness had been an issue in the past it would certainly have been brought to the Commission's attention by the Union.

In response Chairman Duff read the recommended revised wording to proposed policies Chapter 2, Section 7 and Chapter 6, Section 3 as follows: "No officers should work more than 17 hours straight in a 24 hour period". All the officers present agreed to the reasonableness of this modification.

2. Review of Past Minutes

Comm Rubino stated that the minutes of 10/19/16 should have listed him as absent and asked that those minutes be amended to reflect that fact.

Motion by Comm Kolwicz to accept the amended minutes of 10/19/16; seconded by Comm Cleary – unanimous.

3. Budget Report

a) Comptrollers Report

Comm Cleary stated that from his experience on the Board of Finance, reports for the salaries and overtime accounts should include a line for year-to-date budget vs actuals. Because of the potential complexity of the suggestion, Chairman Duff asked Comm Cleary in consultation with the Comptroller, to put together a simple proposal that the Commission can act upon at the next scheduled meeting.

b) Overtime Report

Chief Finch reported expenses as “still running high”. It will not be until January or February that officers currently in field training are on their own and the officer currently at the academy graduates and begins field training that overtime will start to come down.

4. Old Business

a) Monthly Reports

No questions were posed by Commissioners considering the reports.

At the request of Chief Finch one new item was added to New Business, the “Big Chili Road Race” to be considered as the 5th topic.

Motion by Comm Rubino to add the Big Chili Road Race to New Business as the 5th item; seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

5. New Business

• Hickok – Truck Traffic

Assigned to look into this matter (see minutes 10/19/16 New Business), Lt Dickinson reported this as a short cut from Rt302 to Wooster St. It is also an East to West shortcut to Danbury via Meckauer Park and Shelter Rock Rd. Of the 3000 vehicles per day averaging 26 mph, 50 are trucks. While GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) routes traffic over Hickok, unfamiliar truckers, before they turn, can see any potential problems from the steep hills at both ends and can decide if an alternate route is preferable. It does not appear to be a regular truck route other than local activity, dump trucks school buses and the like. There have been no truck accidents in the last three years or reports of stuck trucks unable to make the turns. Since truck impact is minimal the lieutenant does not see a “no thru truck” restriction as desirable or legally justified.

Comm Rubino asked about the guard rail mandated more than a year ago by the Commission. Matt Knickerbocker stated that when the engineering firm hired to study guardrails on Hickok and Chestnut is finished, the project should be completed sometime in December.

• Milwaukee Ave

In a letter, Christian Jensen of 54 Milwaukee Ave, expressed concern over speed and asked for the same speed bumps as on Oxford St. In consultation with Lt Dickinson, Chief Finch stated that speed bumps would not be appropriate for the short stretch involved in this request. The Commission agreed and Lt Dickinson will make contact with the complainant.

- Taylor Ave

The Planning and Zoning Commission asked for a definitive opinion from the Police Commission concerning the development request on Taylor Av. The Commission has addressed this in the past and concludes once again that while the developer can improve sight lines as promised, they remain not sufficient based on Federal guide lines.

Motion by Chairman Duff, that while cognizant that the Developer, Draper, is attempting to make the situation better, the Commission feels sight lines remain the problem as they cannot be changed to meet Federal guide lines; seconded by Comm Rubino – unanimous.

- Nashville Rd

(see minutes 10/19/16 #5 New Business) Considerable selective enforcement has been done on Nashville since the last meeting according to the Chief. A third southbound 25 mph speed limit sign had been installed just before the residence in question. Chairman Duff pointed out that one solution to the complainant's not being able to safely see when exiting their driveway is to not back out but to turn around and pull out nose first. Removing the brush on their property would also help. A D.O.T. engineer riding with Lt Dickinson this week, noted that obstructions such as utility poles and trees came right up to the edge of the paved road surface and suggested that curb lines be drawn to indicate the safe edge of the road. Measuring from the curb line would also change the site line determinations. Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of curb lines.

No motion was put on the table.

- Big Chili Road Race (Sunday 10:00) 2/19/17

This is the 5th year for this foot race. Two officers will be hired. The race starts and ends in Danbury passing through Bethel crossing the road only at Durant Av.

Motion by Chairman Duff to approve the Big Chili Road Race on 2/19/17; seconded by Comm Kolwicz – unanimous.

- General Order Revisions

Chapter 2, Section 7 "Extra Duty Work"

The wording of the section which excluded this General Order at last month's meeting for further consideration was changed as follows: : "No officers should work more than 17 hours straight in a 24 hour period".

Motion by Chairman Duff to accept modifications to Chapter 2, Section 7 "Extra Duty Work" seconded by Comm Cleary – unanimous.

- Chapter 6, Section 3 "Department Overtime and Ordering In"

In addition to minor changes, the language concerning continuous hours worked was also substituted into this general order as: "No officers should work more than 17 hours straight in a 24 hour period".

Motion by Chairman Duff to accept modifications to Chapter 6, Section 3 "Department Overtime and Ordering In" seconded by Comm Cleary – unanimous.

- Chapter 3, Section 1 "Rules of Conduct"

Motion by Chairman Duff to accept modifications to Chapter 3, Section 1 "Rules of Conduct" seconded by Comm Cleary – unanimous.

6. Correspondence

United States Attorney – District of Connecticut

Letter acknowledging Bethel PD for its part along with Greenwich in solving a crime.

A letter from Bruce Cromwell concerning the intersection where Buckboard Ridge, Wolfpits Rd and Codfish meet. Mr Cromwell witnessed cars going through the stop signs at this intersection without stopping. In the interest of safety the request is for stop bars to be painted on the road at each of three stop signs. Commissioners agreed with this and Lt Dickinson will make the request official with the Highway Dept.

7. Police Building

Chief Finch reported the plans as having been finalized. Only one more meeting is required before going out for a bid.

8. Chief's Report

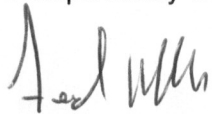
None

9. Commissioner Comments

Comm Rubino relayed a request by former commissioner Chris McCollam that certain curb cuts be made at Berry School by crosswalks instead of having pedestrians step up on a curb and over the grass. Lt Dickinson pointed out the safety aspect of continuing to walk down the sidewalk from Judd rather than encouraging pedestrians crossing too close to a busy intersection. Chairman Duff felt that more information on this request is necessary and asked Lt Dickinson to contact Chris McCollam directly.

At 7:03 motion by Comm Kolwicz to adjourn; seconded by Comm Rubino – unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ferdinand Miller Jr
Secretary